



**CITY OF LOS ALTOS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
December 8, 2015**

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Agenda Item # 10

SUBJECT: Discuss the Charter and structure of the Senior Commission and existing vacancies, and direct staff accordingly

BACKGROUND

On March 23, 2010, the City Council approved the charter and constitution of a pilot Senior Committee. The Committee was originally made up of nine individuals, six from Los Altos and three from Los Altos Hills.

On April 26, 2011, the Council approved establishing the Senior Committee as the Senior Commission. The Los Altos Municipal Code identifies the purpose of the Senior Commission including advising both Los Altos and Los Altos Hills City Councils on senior needs and issues.

On March 26, 2013, the number of members was reduced to seven, with five being appointed by Los Altos and two being appointed by Los Altos Hills.

EXISTING POLICY

Los Altos Municipal Code Section 2.08.140 (Attachment 1)

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

None

DISCUSSION

During its short history, it has been difficult to recruit and retain Senior Commission members and therefore, there have been a number of changes in membership. Most recently in March 2015, there were four new Los Altos members appointed with only one incumbent, continuing Los Altos member. One Los Altos Hills resident was appointed in March 2015 after a long-standing vacancy, with the other Los Altos Hills member resigning in June 2015 prior to the end of her term creating a new vacancy that was filled in October.

In July 2015 during the Council's mid-year retreat, the status of the Senior Commission and the extent to which the Senior Commission members were working effectively together was discussed. At that time, the Council requested a follow-up discussion at a future date. This agenda item provides an opportunity for that discussion.

The services of an outside facilitator were secured in August to assist the group in developing meeting protocols and positive communication strategies. The meeting protocols were approved on September 14, 2015. Two of the newly appointed Los Altos members have since resigned their appointments effective September 15 and November 13, 2015, creating the current vacancies.

During the period leading up to the November 2015 election regarding the City's bond measure to fund the design and construction of a new Hillview Community Center and Park, there was considerable community discussion regarding the needs of seniors and how best to meet them in the

proposed new facility. Since the City has expanded its senior program offerings with some activities now held at the Grant Park Community Center, a number of residents who participate at the new location have also requested additional programs.

At this time, it appears the single greatest need is the further development of recreation programs and services for seniors. Given the current vacancies on the Senior Commission, the Council may wish to consider pursuing an alternate approach and reconstitute this advisory function as an ad hoc working group that places its focus on matters related to senior programming. This model is effectively utilized in Cupertino, Gilroy, Menlo Park, Morgan Hill and Sunnyvale. This could be a six to nine-month effort that would provide recommendations to the staff and/or Council to consider for implementation. Recommendations regarding any expenditures/revenues would be addressed as part of the operating and capital budget process. An evaluation of whether to continue or modify this advisory function could be conducted at the conclusion of the initial period.

If the Council desires to move in this direction, steps in this process would include:

- Disband the Los Altos/Los Altos Hills Senior Commission
- Develop a Senior Program Advisory Group, consisting of five current Senior Program members, with a focus on senior programs and services offered/sponsored by the City of Los Altos
- Advertise the openings on the advisory group
- Conduct interviews
- Appoint members and provide guidelines on the scope and tasks of the advisory group

Other options include:

1. Continue the Senior Commission as currently constituted; conduct a recruitment for the two vacant positions during the annual recruitment to be held in January 2016
2. Disband the Senior Commission; delegate responsibility to the Parks and Recreation Commission for providing input on recreation programs for all ages
3. Modify the structure of the Senior Commission by reducing the number of members, removing the age restriction for appointment and/or include only Los Altos residents

PUBLIC CONTACT

Posting of the meeting agenda serves as notice to the general public.

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

None

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Not applicable

RECOMMENDATION

Discuss the Charter and structure of the Senior Commission and existing vacancies, and direct staff accordingly

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ALTERNATIVES

1. Defer discussion of the Charter and structure of the Senior Commission to the next Council retreat

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Approved by: Marcia Somers, City Manager

ATTACHMENT:

1. Los Altos Municipal Code Section 2.08.140 – Powers and Duties of the Senior Commission

Discuss the Charter and structure of the Senior Commission and existing vacancies, and direct staff accordingly

2.08.140 - Powers and duties of the senior commission.

The joint Los Altos/Los Altos Hills senior commission shall act in an advisory capacity to the council in all matters pertaining to seniors. Its purpose is to:

- A. Advise both city councils on senior needs and issues;
- B. Gather information from the senior community;
- C. Invite stakeholders currently serving seniors to collaborate and share information;
- D. Assist in recommending, planning, and promoting programs, services and resources for seniors;
- E. Investigate and report to the city council on the availability of federal, state, county, local or private funding agencies, sources or programs for the betterment of the senior community;
- F. Assist in applying for grants with the approval of and at the direction of the city council;
- G. Create opportunities for seniors to make significant contributions to the community;
- H. Recommend a Silicon Valley Advisory Council of the Council on Aging representative to be appointed by city council;
- I. Undertake special projects as directed by the council, city manager or finance director; and
- J. Submit an annual report to the city council.

(Ord. No. 2011-369, §5, 8-23-2011)